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Grab Mudge

A comedy

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GRUB MUDGE AND CO.

A COMEDY

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IN ONE ACT.

✓ BY

LUCAS HIRST, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "SUDDEN REFORMATION," "THE FALL OF ELESIE," "THE SACK OF ROME,"
"DISMAL SWAMP," ETC. ETC.

TOGETHER WITH THE STAGE DIRECTIONS, CAST OF
CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, ETC.

(As played at the Chestnut Street Theatre.)

SECOND EDITION:

REVISED AND CORRECTED:

TOGETHER WITH A PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR.

PHILADELPHIA:

STOKES AND BROTHER,

209 CHESTNUT STREET.

1853.

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PHILADELPHIA:
T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION.

It seldom occurs in the history of dramatic literature that we find gentlemen who are engaged in the active and laborious duties of professional life, enjoying sufficient leisure to put forth productions of that description. The name of T. Noon Talfourd, at once a learned jurist and the distinguished author of "Ion," is perhaps the most remarkable instance of the kind which now occurs to us. The comedy contained in these pages is an humbler instance, of a similar character. The author of these pages is not a playwright by profession; but he evidently possesses a rich vein of comicality and wit, which, bursting through the shackles of legal associations, and of graver studies, has glittered forth in the sparkling and brilliant coruscations which lie scattered, in frequent and rich profusion, throughout the following production.

Upon a careful examination of this play we were convinced that its publication would redound to the author's credit, and we have, therefore, urged him to consent to its immediate appearance, in its present form. In 1850, the play was put upon the stage, at the Chestnut Street Theatre in this city; and, as we learn, though hastily gotten up, and badly cast, it was received with strong marks of popular admiration; that it occupied the first place of the evening's performance, and that it took the audience by surprise, in consequence of the many striking and humorous novelties which it contains. The reader will here meet with passages of polished language and of brilliant sentiment. There are many powerful hits at the weaknesses of mercantile life, and many exposures of the meanness, the heartless selfishness, and the disgraceful perfidy which characterize, too often, the conduct and the intercourse of men.

We are convinced that the literary and moral merits of this comedy will gain in popular approbation, till it becomes one of the standard and permanent favorites of the *comical* muse. When pro-

perly put upon the stage, as it surely deserves to be, it will appear to great advantage, and will by no means be considered as a still-born or an abortive production. We believe that it is now submitted to the public in its original state; and, unless we are very much mistaken in our estimate of intellectual merit, this comedy furnishes, in its leading characters, an untrodden arena, and an unappropriated domain, wherein the highest comic genius need not disdain to put forth its noblest and proudest exertions, and in which it may heighten the lustre of its most brilliant laurels! In a word, the reader will here find, beyond all question, a very *comical comedy*!

It would be out of place to illustrate the peculiar merits of this comedy, by quoting any particular passages which possess superior merit. We will remark, however, that the leading characters are full of interest—are boldly drawn, and are highly original. Of the *comædiæ personæ*, we observe that Charles Snapper is a young, penniless, and worthless spendthrift about town, who lives according to the modern maxim of “going it on shape and talent.” His part is full of action, and he carries the piece through by a novel expedient, which is gradually and beautifully unravelled as the play progresses.

Mr. Grub Mudge is the principal spoke in the histrionic wheel; he is the leading and most essential character in the piece, and is a very excellent representative of a large and important class of every commercial community, who possess among their number persons of very opposite principles and practices. He is one of the better sort among them; and those who resemble him, and imitate his wholesome virtues, deserve the respect of every one. S.

PHILADELPHIA: Dec. 10, 1852.

P R E F A C E .

THE speedy demand that has been made for a second edition of Grub Mudge & Co., warrants the author, while complying with the request, in advancing a few remarks in justification of his play, inasmuch as it has been the subject of wholesale personal vituperation. The scene lies in London, and there remains until its close. Any one who has had the slightest knowledge of theatrical productions, will find that the author intended that the merit of this play should rather be pleasing than striking; or, in other words, that the busy activity of the plot and design would, without difficulty, carry off all other imperfections; and be overlooked by a more rigid scrutiny into its merits. During its performance the audience is kept constantly alive; and, as the principal intent of comedy is to entertain and afford the care-tired mind a few hours of dissipation, a piece consisting of a number of lively, busy scenes, intermingled with light easy conversation and characters, which, if not glaring, are at least not unnatural, will frequently answer that purpose more effectually than a comedy of more complete and labored regularity. Yet this play is not entirely devoid of merit with respect to character, since that of Mr. Grub Mudge is well drawn, and may be considered as a just portrait of a merchant of the present age. Snapper is a fair impersonation of a young modern go-ahead, living by his wits, and ready to catch at straws as an auxiliary to fortune. And how many by such means have been successful.

Tilbury, the aspiring clerk, is a part worthy of admiration, because of the active part he shortly takes, although bemoaning at first the hard fate that had placed him there. The truth is, he becomes a very important personage without being conscious of it. When he was placed in the house of Grub Mudge & Co., he was put there like most young men of fortune are, of the higher order of society (whose fathers, throwing aside foolish pride and prejudice), to enjoy the profits and extend the limits of that commerce which is the staple basis of the nation. Cicero has said that the same people should not be at once the lords and factors of the earth: "*Nolo eandem populum imperatorem et portitorem esse terrarum.*" And this opinion might be consonant to the principles of the Roman government, but that great statesman did not live in the enjoyment of that liberty which now sustains, extends, and ennobles commerce.

Delia Mudge is a character thrown in as a means of inspiring the ambition of Snapper, and by which Mudge's reputation and that of the house are sustained.

I did not intend to make "*soups*," or so far insult our worthy merchants, in whom the life of our existence is kept up, by placing them in that category. And had the critics had half an eye, they would have divined my object in putting them in the position I

have. Snapper manages to play upon the unguarded credulity of the merchants, and hence effects his purpose.

The introduction of the words, "*Doctors' Commons*," was for the purpose of giving a tone to the play; it is also synonymous with a law court, and has reference thereto, in the sense used, it being a place where civil matters are heard. In one or two places I have used it as a play upon words; and by a reference to the regular place where such matters are heard; and where employed, the words are understood. Another objection made to this play is, that Mr. Mudge, in his dialogue, says that certain goods were marked paid; this is of frequent occurrence in mercantile life. Again, that the idea of the queen borrowing money in the manner stated in the play, is objected to as absurd. In this objection my critics have not displayed much reading. Had they just turned to the most modern of dramatic authors, Bulwer, they would have found the following passage:—

2d Sec. The affairs of England, sire, most urgent;
Charles the First has lost a battle
That decides one-half his realm.
Craves money, sire, and succor.
Louis. He shall have both. Eh, Baradas?

In other words, the queen means the government. But the great point in dramatic representations is, to throw every material point that has any link in the unravelment of the plot immediately before the audience, on the stage, and not tell them of it. Now, here it was more than necessary, as it is employed as a means of decoying the merchants by the artifice.

Where the characters are real, the incidents interesting, the catastrophe pleasing, and the language pure, spirited, and natural, the play will then meet with fair patronage. The great point here, is to show the absurdity of suspicion. But there is a class of men in this city who are so barren of intellect that they find no entertainment or knowledge in themselves or any one else. They, however, have acquired a knowledge of the use of the most absurd figures that I ever recollect to have seen on paper; and these are the *jack-asses* that write for the papers. True criticism is the application of the pen to the paper, as the artist to the canvas, when he marks out with his pencil the several applications of taste and good sense; and to distinguish what is faulty, and what is worthy of admiration; and in such a discrimination, the critic must keep up the natural, pure flow, without descending, where his mind fails, to the very lowest vulgarisms in order to make his figure happy.

The remarks on Grub Mudge & Co., I am sorry to find, savor of such a low emanation that the critic's breed cannot be mistaken. Hence, they "turn awry and lose the name of action."

We are informed by Aristotle, that unity of action in dramatic composition is only necessary to judge of the excellence of the performance; because, what may be found fault with in the bureau, will appear perfectly proper and consistent on the stage. I have a number of plays before me that were condemned before they appeared, many of which are now considered admirable productions.

An author, it is true, will compose in such a manner as will be agreeable to the feelings of his readers; yet, at the same time, there may be loose objections found by those who are disposed to be malignant, and attack the man and not his writings. We are told that Homer was acquainted with no system, yet he composed what all posterity has admired. He, however, is excused on the ground that no human genius is perfect. But small critics in everything will pick a flaw, seize an unguarded straggling outpost, and imagine themselves in possession of the reins of his author; in other words, they steal a goose and give the giblets in alms. Accustomed to reading one author, they plumb everything by it. Down comes the rule and compass, and away they set to butchering the angles; and, after taking the length, breadth, height, and depth—swear it wants the color, expression, grace, purity, learning, air, taste, and the grand contour of Shakspeare! And because we did not live in that age, or follow him, we are to be told that we'll go down, down! *Drunkards*, by Scripture we are informed, go down, and that authors go up. Poor, dear man; he read his Bible far otherwise than we have. We have said that in comedy there is nothing that renders it liable to censure, if there be a proper unity of action and subjects, and that the unities of time and place be as much as possible preserved, properly linked together, and the stage not evacuated until its close. The critic would have had me introduce vulgar, low expression, only to be found in his office; and where his low genius fails to afford him mean similes, he gives the whole of passages, leaving the public to infer what it is impossible for him to convey.

In those passages pointed out by the critic, I now propose to prove them justly consonant in all, not only on the stage, but in the closet. After the Erato skips the most pointed parts of this play, he alights on page 24; and to this I shall now direct my attention. Time may be said, figuratively, to tread, or pass, or it may sweep over us like the waves, unheeded, until "the hour's fate" of our destiny comes, when it is too late to recall what has passed; we do not "see or heed it," and hence we are compelled to meet it. And even in that sad hour, we dream of things we hope to enjoy, while destiny is closely thickening around us. Then it may be considered passed, and "so the joys that ne'er will come again." We may also watch the burning of a lamp, and so compare it to destiny. It is a simile from the Bible, aptly applied. The soliloquy, also says, "yet in the midst of all this warning, man fells man, and trifles with his rights;" and then referring to what has transpired in the play, he says, "reflect," or, in other words, circulate the report of man's misfortune, and "all revel" in it; or, that which "adversity" brings and enjoys it. The Duke de la Rochefoucault has somewhere expressed the same idea, though in different language: "There is something not unpleasing in the misfortunes of our best friends."

On page 25 "audacity" may "flash," or appear, or be assumed, or be exercised over man's judgment, and his weak or "melient foibles;" and "assume a virtue" that "audacity" (man) wears when others will (still having a reference to what has occurred in this play) believe the report, or hang upon the breath (man) that

has circulated it, not thinking from whom and from whence it came; which will be soon mistaken for "wisdom, wealth, and power," and so secure him "all virtue and protection!" By taking this view, and reflecting on what has been previously said and done in this play, the passage is perfectly consistent and proper. And so, Mr. Critic, return to the abode of Agapemenon,

"Where great *Pan*, who with upcast eyes,
Then sighed for earth to lay his lair—
That wing'd as swift as seraph flies,
He would his spreading couch were there!"

On page 26, Scene IV., Tilbury soliloquizes on the subject of *Fortune*. He speaks of how "she enriches her votaries," or those who follow her; that she "flutters up and down, till at last her merit (fortune) gives where least it is expected." An occurrence which takes place every day. Again, speaking metaphorically,

"She jests—she raves—she wills—
She woos—yet seldom stays
To reap the harvest of her seed."

Now she may—she will lay out the plan of fortune in our minds, which may be called "seed," yet not stay; or it (fortune) may fail to bring us what we expected from the experiment.

"Mine was made of toys and impudence."

Refer to what Tilbury did, and you will find this line faultless. "The most trifling scheme that you can forge," or suggest in a "moment," by "accident," or that flies before you, *i. e.*, in your imagination; or, in other words, when you behold a certain *thing*, which you think, if quickly seized, caught, and shrewdly managed, or that your natural ambition or activity of mind will prompt you to try, will "oft respond prophetic," because you prophesize it will, to your will. We often say we prophesy that such and such will come to pass; and so these lines mean to convey, that, by your ingenuity, artifice, and the applying a certain something to use (mechanical, if you please), it may, I prophesy it will, respond in future; or, "prophetic" to your will.

By the energy and impudence of Tilbury, he becomes one of the first houses; and, in the concluding portions of his soliloquy, he tells you how he met with his fortune, and actually explains the foregoing passage entire, and to the satisfaction of even a casual and unreflecting reader.

When the Editorialist said that this play was original in plot, he spoke a verity, and meant that as it is here laid out it was novel; not that the same ground had not been gone over before—but the manner of its development was original. A story in a play may turn on "financial difficulties," and yet be travelled over in a way far different from that represented in any previous production. The critic, notwithstanding his objections to certain ideas in this play, seems to have committed a great blunder in having confounded Newgate with the Prison in White Cross Street; the latter of which is the only regular apartment where debtors are confined; but the prisoners may by habeas corpus be removed to the King's Bench

Prison, where better accommodations are afforded. In order to avoid further objection (although I think in the sense used before it was correct), I have altered the words "Doctors' Commons" to that of the Prison in White Cross Street. The critic's mention of the word "pellucid," not a little staggered me (knowing his pretensions to college-scrubbings)—as that word strictly refers to features, or material matter, and not LETTERS. The use of the word "Diaphragm" is just as inelegant, inappropriate, and vulgar, as the words "go it while you're young," as dignified by the critic's application of them. The college Birch seems to have inspired this Oak with an unlimited command over the use of words and countries, only known to him in his dreams. Hence, he might well say, "we should probably have to look in vain for a worthy comparison FOR it"—for the bare mention of "Thebes" and the "Pyramids" would raise his "special wonder" 'mid the clouded fumes of indigestion, rising o'er his burnished head! Whether his feelings arose from over potations, or this enterprise, he has not informed us—more probably, from the bundle of books under his arm (and not in his head), as a clown bears a bauble, of which he knoweth not of; or as the player did the pilfered verse—in his fuddling cap!—

When strange eruptions
Diseased by nature's phlegm,
Oftentimes breaks forth,
Unruly to command!

Mention has been made of the extravagant manner in which the Editor has been pleased to remark on passages that "lie scattered throughout" this play. To this I would answer, that an editor is never considered guilty of an indecorum in praising his principal. How far he has erred in his estimate of those passages, he leaves it to those fittest to judge—the public. This play was written by one of themselves, and whatever merit it possesses will depend entirely upon their continued encouragement.

It has been said, great things were expected from the leisure of a man who "turned aside" from the scene of professional life, and retired to employ his mind in an occupation far different from that of his existence. I did not write for profit or reward, or with an intention of taxing the press—but for amusement, and to oblige a friend who had "bantered" me. I have, therefore, nothing to congratulate myself upon, unless it be the malice of a hypocrite. Wrapt in the midst of my business, I did not expect to put forth a work overladen and strained with new ideas, to explain or direct the operations of others. I have, however, illustrated and enforced morality and justice; delineated the characters and passions of mankind, because I thought the merchants here required it, and I am content. I shall conclude my preface, for the benefit of the critics, with the following happy quotation, which I think *Isocrates* makes in one of his orations to the *Sophists*: "That it is far more easy to maintain a wrong cause, and to support paradoxical opinions to the satisfaction of a common auditory, than to establish a doubtful truth by solid and conclusive arguments."

LUCAS HIRST.

CAST OF CHARACTERS, AND COSTUMES,

AS PERFORMED AT

THE CHESTNUT STREET THEATRE, IN 1850.

GRUB MUDGE, A LONDON MERCHANT. Full black; short knee breeches; white cravat; cane	Mr. ELLSLER.
TILBURY, AN ASPIRING CLERK. Plain light suit. Afterwards, straps, standing-collar, and polished boots	“ RICHARDSON.
SNAPPER, A MAN ABOUT TOWN. Cross-barred pants (fashionable); blue dress-coat and gilt buttons; cravat; polished boots, and small cane	“ BAKER.
GRABEM, ONE OF THE KNOWIN' ONES. Gray suit	“ YOUNG.
BILLINGTON. Short nankin pants, long straps; umbrella, spectacles, and overcoat	“ G. STONE.
PEPPER. Black pants; white cravat; long dress coat	“ BAYLEY.
CROWQUILL. White pants; black dress coat; umbrella; specs	“ HENRY.
BULL. Plain suit, dark	“ LEWIS.
JOHNS. Nankin suit, cane, and long cravat	“ SAVAGE.
GUNNELL. Full black suit; white cravat	“ WORRELL.
SPINDLE. Nankin suit; umbrella	“ DOWLING.
SMALL. Gray suit	“ LANGDON.
CAPIAS. Plain suit	“ JAMES.
CONSTABLE. Plain suit	“ JONES.
WRITALL, A MESSENGER. Tight-kneed yellow breeches; crimson plush coat; shoes, and large buckles	“ CALLADINE.
SYKES. Plain dark suit	“ SPARKS.
DYKES. “ “	“ BATES.
NEWSBOY. Ragged suit, and straw hat	Master GEORGE.
DELIA MUDGE. White dress	Miss A. EBERLE.

GRUB MUDGE AND CO.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A room in the Commercial House of Grub Mudge & Co. TILBURY discovered sitting on a very high stool at desk in c. Large pen behind his ear. Pens, papers, books, &c., distributed. Maps, desks, gun above desk, L. and C. Door on L., second entrance; also, door in M. F., and window above, open.*

Til. Doom'd by fate to die with the consumption! Driving this cursed quill all the days of my life! What a stupid old block my dad was, to direct in his last will and testament: "Imprimis; you John Tilbury, of Dorsetshire, must become a London merchant, or lose my entire estate: in which event, I bequeath it to the most dutiful of my family." So much for the imprimis. And there's my mother, too—Lady Tilbury, with a jointure of three thousand pounds a year—indulging in all the frivolities of the age; whilst her devoted son John (in obedience to his father's will and that provoking imprimis) is compelled to sit from morning till night, wasting, like a ball of soap, in the accounting-house of Grub Mudge and Company. [*Writing.*] I shall never finish this "Imprimis!" pshaw! bills of lading one should have said. Old Mudge gives one no peace. Go here; go there; and be sure and be back within five minutes, are the constant words. Then, away I must go; then back again to this "Imprimis!" Here he comes! [*Enter Grub Mudge, L., in deep thought.*] Fifty-five bales of South-Sea cotton, at seven and three quarters, to Cooper, Smith, & Pottington!

Mudge. [c.] Monetary affairs decidedly in the decline; trade fluctuating; cotton low; probability of corn going up;

hem! What an unaccountable and mysterious piece of machinery this mercantile traffic is, to be sure! All conjecture; all theory. Here we are! up to-day—down to-morrow. Oh, that all my affairs were amicably settled, my ships safe in harbor, and that old Grub Mudge was once more fairly seated at home, contented and free! Alas! this is not my fate. Tempests, winds, rocks and water, hold my destiny within their gripe!—Tilbury, boy, hast been out to-day? What news upon 'Change?

Til. Imprimis! Dull enough, indeed, sir; sad times! Sharp talking about Billington & Co.

Mudge. Zounds! I have indorsed for that house—and heavily. Here's sad news, indeed!

Til. Pepper & Crowquill, sir, hard run; paper imprimised at two, and knock'd off at three per cent.!

Mudge. You amaze me!

Til. And, as for Bull & Johns, sir, they are teetotally imprimised!

Mudge. Mercy on us; we shall be irretrievably ruined!

Enter GRABEM and CAPIAS, M. D.

Grab. [L.] Is Mr. Mudge within?

[To *Til.*

Til. There is Mr. Mudge, sir.

Grab. (C.) [To *Mudge*, *Tilbury* observing.] Mr. Mudge, we are here, in the discharge of a very unpleasant duty; the firm of Gunnell & Small has this day failed, and paying scarcely five per cent. on their paper. You were found indorser to the amount of three thousand pounds; for the which, the Spindles have placed in my hands a capias for your apprehension and confinement. Our orders are imperative; therefore, pay the debt, or go with us to prison!

[Tapping *Mudge* on the shoulder.

Mudge. Here is, indeed, a shock to the house of Grub Mudge & Co.

Til. [Aside.] An imprimis!

Mudge. [Aside, R.] One of the oldest houses closed its doors, and left me without means to liquidate. Oh! this vile indorsement; behold, how it leads to penury and ruin, and often to disgrace! I have not a shilling in the house; all is on sea! Should this affair be discovered, I am lost—credit, reputation, all gone! But, why this raving? Have I not pass'd by, without notice, many conflicts which I have

had to encounter in the commercial world? Now caution, without malignity, is only necessary to rise above this cunning trick of the Spindles. They'd ruin the House of Grub Mudge & Co. ! Shallow scheme ! How vain is man—void of reason—involved in error—and ignorant of the true road of business life. I shall use them yet, and with that superiority which my reason gives me over them !

Enter SNAPPER, laughing and talking as he enters, M. D.

Snap. [L.] Oh, yes ! you'll hear from me soon, wherry soon !—To have the impudence to ask a gentleman of my fashion for the amount of his tailor's bill in the public street. Who ever heard of such monstrosity ? [*Looking at officers.*] Hollo ! Sheriff's officers ! So, I smell an enormously large-sized rat : one of those critters that pick their company and live at Doctors' Commons ! All is not well with this firm. Now, the poet somewhere says :—

“There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.”

She hath, however, divers ways to enrich her perseverants : to some, without deserving ; to deserving, without honor ; and to others wit, without wealth or honors. Now, that's just my case ; and, strange to say, I never curst her for't, except my tailor's fate ; and let me say that, practically, you must never pay a tailor's bill, because it gives you an air of fashion which you had not before. A tailor pursuing you is indicative of note, and an evidence of your responsibility ; whilst the patronage of ready-cash stores, unnoticed, the melancholy of the tailor without the contingent expectation of your bill (which always makes him melancholy), passes you away, like the silent senator I could mention, who's only known by the cash he extracts from the public treasury.

[*Crosses to R.*

Mudge. [*Aside, observing Snapper.*] Snapper here ! I like not this ; and yet may he not be of use to me ?

Snap. [*Aside.*] Yes, 'tis true ; those cut-throats, Gunnell and Small, have done this. I know their object. Is not this, now, a case that requires the acuteness of a Snapper ? Let me see.

Til. [*Mournfully.*] Imprimis.

Snap. Mudge [*aside*] has one of the most fascinating

of daughters, whose destiny must be Snapper. Hard fate that, too. Now the poet again says:—

“ Wouldst thou win—
This must thou do.”

So, then, to show Mudge how I can relieve him and save the credit of the house. [*Aloud.*] Is Mr. Mudge within?

Mudge. (R.) [*Aside.*] What does this fellow mean? His levity will certainly ruin us; but to necessity I must yield, and hence redeem, by some glorious device, which, alone, this fellow knows. Although no stranger, indifference may enable me to clear the house of these hateful leeches of brief authority. [*To Snapper.*] Sir, I am that gentleman.

Snap. (R.) [*To Mudge.*] Sir, I am pleased to find you at home. [*Then aside to Mudge.*] I understand all. Leave this affair to me; I'll get you out of it, on the honor of a man, and with credit. [*Aloud.*] My name is Spillington, of the firm of Payall & Co., of Liverpool.

Mudge. (L.) I wish [*aside*] he would pay my debts, then, and relieve me of this uncomfortable situation.

Snap. (C.) There remains from transactions between that house and yours a balance, in your favor, of four hundred and one pounds seven shillings and sixpence. I am, therefore, instructed to close the account.

Grab. [*Aside to Cap.*] Thank fortune, here's a chance of payment without being obliged to take this poor devil to a sponging-house! If we get the money, we make our poundage; if we take him to prison, we're minus five pounds six. Let them talk awhile. Cap'y, probably we'll bate the money.

Snap. (L.) [*Aside to Mudge.*] The hook's had a nibble; see how they take the bait. Endeavor to effect an escape, and meet me, without fail, in the next street.

Mudge. [*Aloud.*] Most opportune! My ships are all on sea, funds are low, and these gentlemen [*with a significant look*] are waiting for funds to convey to the new house.

Cap. Yes, Mr. Mudge, we are very anxious to be off, as business will be brisk at the *new house to-day*. Won't it, Grabbey?

Grab. You may be sure of that.

Snap. It is indifferent to me to whom I pay it, so that I get the receipt of Grub Mudge & Co. [*To Mudge, and aloud.*] Give me the receipt, and here's the money.

[*Placing his hand on his pocket, Mudge goes to the desk where Til. is sitting. Discovers his eye-glasses are not there.*]

Mudge. Bless me, my eye-glasses! I have left them in the next room. Here, Tilbury, write a receipt, whilst I look for my glasses. [*Exit Mudge, M. D.*]

Grab. L., Cap. L. [*Alarmed.*] I say, Cap., we shouldn't a' let the old codger go; if he plays us "fowl," we're in for't—debt, interest, costs, and all.

Cap. [*Aside to Grab.*] This fellow, Pill—Pillington, I don't like him altogether. Suppose, now, he should not be Mr. Payall, it will become necessary for us to pay in.

Grab. We must keep a sharp look-out. [*To Snapper.*] I say, Mr. Pillington, don't you think old Mudge lingers along, faith?

Snap. [*Throwing himself into a chair near M. D.*] *Patience* is a forbearance to which I aspire. [*Aside.*] Videlicet, at tailor's bill.

Cap. [C.] This looks suspicious. [*To Grab.*] Tell the fellow who we are, or, hang it, we'll not get off to-night.

Grab. [C.] Mr. Payall, what's a use in trifling; it is necessary that we should come to an explanation. We are not in the employ of Grub Mudge & Co.; that was only a *ruse* to save his credit; we are sheriff's officers, here in the discharge of our duty. We expect the settlement of our capias, or Mudge must go—you understand?

Snap. Well; capital, plain, and open. A candid confession is good for the soul, and deception for the body, they say. [*To officers.*] Since you have been so ingenuous, learn, then, WHO WE ARE. My name [*putting his hands in his back-pockets*] is not Spillington [*officers alarmed*]; nor do I, or any of our firm, which is numerous, owe Mr. Mudge anything, except a good deed to a fallen man in distress, whom you, and those who have employed you, would destroy, in the vain hope they might profit by it, and ruin the credit of this house. Yet our name is Payall & Co.; that is, when we can. By name, plain Snapper.

Grab. Snapper! What, Charley Snapper? [*S. rises.*]

Snap. The same.

Grab. [*To Cap.*] Cap., we've been trepann'd. Here's treachery and deception. Pursue the fugitive 'ere it be too late!

[*Officers rush towards middle D. Snap. stands between, drawing from his pockets two pistols, and stands in an attitude to fire; presenting one at each officer, who arrange themselves diagonally.*]

Snap. Not so fast; let me make good my word, and *pay all*, without receipt.

Cap. Sir, we must do our duty; we'll teach you what we can do. [*Officers make another attempt.*]

Snap. Look ye here! my name is Snapper, and this is the *pay-all* I deal in, ha! ha! [*Presenting pistols at officers.*] You see I don't require a receipt!

Cap. Do you dare impede the progress of the law, sir? This is high treason!

Snap. I don't know anything about high treason or low treason; but this I know, that if either of you move one peg Mr. *Payall* will post his books, and make a final account of it!

Grab. Snapper, we know you!

Snap. Yes, and I know you; this pays for your barbarity to my old mother! Here, *Tilbury*, bring a rope and tie these fellows!

Grab. What! tie officers of the law; on your allegiance we charge you!

Snap. We don't know anything of allegiance in these times! [*Tilbury draws a rope out of desk, and advances; officers attempt escape, M. D.*] Move but a step (these are *Colt's* hair-trigger) and it will be your last!

[*Til. ties officers and returns to desk.*]

Cap. This is trespass! Look to it, Snapper!

Snap. Catch me, if you can, *Cap.*; recollect, I'm a desperate fellow, and never come unarmed! [*Snap. passes at them with his cane.*] Oh, ye dogs! trespass, hey! Treason, hey! Allegiance, hey! [*Retires to Til.*]

Enter DELIA MUDGE, from R. advance to C.

Delia. I have been in anxious expectation of my dear father! Can it be possible that he is ruined? Alas! I fear all is not well. The paper gives a sad account of the —.

Til. Imprimis! [*Mournfully.*]

Delia. Distress and disgrace will break his poor heart! [*Observes officers.*] Mercy on us, there are those cruel, unfeeling officers of *White Cross Street*! All then, indeed, is

lost; we'll be disgraced, and my father gazetted! When pleasure sparkles in the cup of youthful years, and rich, verdant hope, see how she is robb'd by the conspiracy of fortuitous events, and left perilous and alone!

Snap. [*Advancing to c. Delia affects surprise.*] Think not so; I came to speak comfort to that grief; bid it turn to smiles, and wait content. Events wear not the face you fasten on them. I've seen your father, but now, and at my solicitation, he went out; I'm to meet him shortly. You see I've secured these *rascals* to keep them out of mischief, until means can be provided to put the firm of Grub Mudge & Co. on its feet again. I have pledged my word, and what Mr. Payall says [*looking at officers*] comes to pass; hey, Grab? [*To Delia.*] Therefore, arrest your fears, to abide the issue of my endeavors. If Snapper does not make good his word, he will no longer look this way [*towards Delia*], nor claim your approbation, but retire into some lone desert, unworthy the notice of Delia Mudge!

Delia. But should you fail, Charles, then we are doubly ruined! Thou know'st the sun's proud meridian must have its sitting, and so may thy hopes.

Snap. [*Crosses to L.*] Fail! Fail! think not of that! I feel within me a strength above all earthly doubt or apprehension; a peace so reconciled to success that *fail* could have no lodgment here! *Snapper keeps his word* [*looking at officers*], eh! Grab? [*To Delia.*] And will build up the oldest and best firm in all London; and should such be the case, my dear Delia will not fear or dread to look on him who longs to unite his fate with her's, and bless the hours that conspire to make us happy!

Grab. If you serve her as you have us, there's great apprehension. Look to it, Snapper, we'll have the law on you!

Snap. Ah, Grab., you may have it on me, and to me, but never into me.

Grab. This is *damnum et injuria*!

Snap. No, Grab., it's *deceptio visus, debito justiciæ*; you see I comprehend your court lingo. By the bye, Grab., tell old scullum Tempus I shall be down on him for nex' sheriff, and then you shall be *Custo*! [*To Delia.*] And now, my dear Delia, let time glide away untold, until the gay to-morrow of the mind brings forth such news as will secure eternal

bliss ! It's growing late, and your father now claims my attention ; let not sighs, nor tears, nor trains of grief work in upon thyself until the morrow !

Delia. I've no reason to doubt what you have said ; the generous spirit with which you have acted seems to sanction the belief that your future presence will confirm it. 'Till we meet again, believe me, I shall count the anxious moments, in hopes they will more swiftly pass away. Heaven grant you may be successful ! [Exit, L.]

Snap. [To *Til.*] Tilbury, on your future prospects of preferment, guard your customers ; feed, clothe, and otherwise treat them, as the law directs. [To *Grab.*] Good-by, nolle prosequi ! habeas corpus ! fieri facias !

I do not love you, Lawyer Jack,
Because you're officer of the pack ;
You see your *papers* are all a fudge—
Arrest, you cannot, old Grub Mudge ;
And, when you hear a thund'ring clatter,
Know ! 'tis Payall and Charley Snapper !

[Exit, M. D.]

Grab. Look here, Mr. Clerk, what's your name ?

Til. Imprimis.

Cap. Recollect, we were incarcerated against our will ; you'll bear witness ?

Til. [Aside, advances to L.] I suppose now I must learn my trade. [To *Grab.*] Witness ! what's that ?

Cap. Why, to testify to the Court what they did to us.

Til. I didn't see 'em do anything !

Cap. *Grab.*, this rascal's in the conspiracy to rob the law ! Look ye, [to *Til.*] didn't you tie me ? Were we not put under duress vile ?

Til. You're vile enough, no doubt ; but, as for the duress, I can't testify.

Cap. [To *Grab.*] Oh ! here's a condition to be in ! We'll have no action !

Til. Oh ! if you want action, I'll give you plenty of that.

[Beats them.]

Grab. Oh ! oh ! This is battery.

Til. Oh ! you want to be battered, do you ? [Knocks them about.] [Aside.] A sudden thought strikes me. If I could only get that *capias* they talk'd so much about, per-

haps it might save some trouble—a great deal of expense—and turn to our account. Now I'll try the experiment.

[*Retires to back of stage, takes down the gun, advances, and commences loading it.*]

Grab. I say, Mr. Imprimis, what are you going to do with that?

Til. Shoot two rats that annoy the counting-house.

Cap. Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! We're done for! What will become of us? That fellow will certainly shoot us!

Grab. What shall we do? [Alarmed.]

Til. Give me that writ.

Grab. That we dare not do.

Til. What! [Pointing the butt of the gun towards them.]

Grab. Stop! stop! Here it is in my pocket. [Tilbury takes writ out of Grabem's pocket.] Take away that gun; it smells of powder!

Til. [Aside.] Thanks! thanks! I have the process. Now to ease the mind of old Grub Mudge. [Exit, M. D.]

Grab. I say, Cap.! We're in a terrible predicament! We'd better endeavor to break loose and make ourselves secure, or we'll be ruined.

Cap. Faith, that's sure enough!

[Officers break loose, and search counting-house—finally go to desk, L. H.]

Grab. What have we here? a box containing valuables. We'll secure these.

Cap. Certain.

Delia. [Appears at window M.] What! thieves in my father's counting-house! I'll watch them.

Grab. Let's open this desk. [Tries desk, L. H. U. E.]

Delia. Thieves! thieves! Watch! watch!

Grab. Discovered! We must make our escape, or all will be lost! [Tries doors, finds them locked.]

Cap. I see that we are in for't. We must make a desperate effort to get out of this place.

Enter Constable and Assistant, M. D., followed by DELIA.

Cons. Surrender in the Queen's name.

[Attempting to seize them.]

Cap. [L.] Hands off! You may be compelled to answer for this at the Sessions!

Grab. [L.] Sir, we came here in the discharge of our official duty—to apprehend Grub Mudge.

Cons. [C.] This is a late hour to do such work: the law knows better.

Grab. That was our business here.

Cons. Then let me see your authority.

Delia. [R.] Yes; make them show their authority; I'm sure they have none.

Grab. [*Aside.*] Cap., here's a fix! What's to be done?

Cap. [*Aside to Grab.*] Oh! show them any writ—they can't read.

Grab. [*Aside to Cap.*] Good logic that, Cap. [*To Cons.*] Here, sirs; here's the writ. [*Taking writ out of his pocket.*]

Cons. [*Reads.*] Tomscull *versus* Pumpkin, 1829. Why this isn't against Grub Mudge, or any of this house.

Delia. I told you they had no writ; search them, Mr. Constables: they've got my father's property about them.

Grab. and Cap. We'll not submit to be searched; we claim our privilege.

Cons. [*Searches them, finds a box of jewels on Grab.*] Hollo! what have we here? As I live, valuables. Oh! you'll get to the Old Bailey sure, now! We'll have no more talk now; so, come along!

Grab. We can explain this, all.

Cons. and Assist. We want no explanation; come along to the "Old Bailey." [*Seizing them.*]

Grab. and Cap. Sirs! sirs! Mr. Constables! Snapper! Grub Mudge! Imprimis! have done all this! We can explain ourselves!

Cons. and Assist. No resistance, fellows! We must do our duty.

Grab. and Cap. We will be heard!

Cons. Justice Buggins will hear you, no doubt.

Grab. and Cap. We want our rights!

Cons. Silence! You'll soon be hung—and then it will be all right!

[*Exit Cons. and Assistant, dragging out Grab. and Cap., Delia following, M. D.*]

SCENE II.—Public Square—Merchants' 'Change Place.

Enter MUDGE, R. SNAPPER, L.

Snap. Well met! All, sir, has succeeded beyond my warmest expectations. Your imprimis clerk is a fellow of strange character, but a man of some parts; see here, finished

what we left undone. During our absence, he compelled the officers to disgorge the writ; and here it is [*twirling writ in his hand*]; then closed and locked the door to prevent their escape. The rogues, finding they were completely outwitted and foiled, endeavored to rifle the counting-house (in order to make themselves secure). Your daughter discovered this, gave the alarm, and they are now safely confined within the four walls of the Old Bailey, awaiting your presence to prosecute. [*Crosses to R., Mudge to L.*]

Mudge. Mr. Snapper, I do not know how I shall ever be able to repay your assiduity in my behalf, in thus saving the reputation of our house.

Snap. Sir, the bare mention doubly repays obligation; happy am I in the conscious recollection of having achieved so glorious a victory over your merciless and unfeeling creditors, who would endeavor to annihilate your power 'pon 'Change. But, sir, you have not completed your triumph as yet; you have a brother, I believe, coming over in a ship from the Indies?

Mudge. I have.

[*Sorrowfully.*]

Snap. That ship, doubtless, is utterly lost; although the intelligence is not, as yet, publicly announced.

Mudge. [*Sorrowfully.*] I have had such intimation; but what has that to do with my embarrassments?

Snap. I'll tell you: you first must perceive, it isn't known; of course, the Strand companies are not posted; therefore, I would have you, without delay, effect a life insurance on your brother, in the sum of fifty thousand pounds, in small sums at each office, in order to elude suspicion; this sum covers all your liabilities; in the mean time, I'll go down to the Old Bailey, report that business 'pon 'Change will prevent the possibility of your attention to this matter for a few days, and enjoin the justice to admit no one to the presence of the officers; thus closing their mouths until the firm of Grub Mudge & Co. is established on a broader and firmer basis than it ever was.

Mudge. Your apt thoughts conceive a miracle ere 'tis accomplished; and your voice is an oracle to the afflicted.

Snap. [*c.*] When I roll my miracles and oracles into realities, then, perchance, I may merit a gift within your power to give. Now, my dear sir, this is no time for sentiment; I see the merchants are about gathering, and I would

not have them find you here. You to the life insurances—and I to publish the loss of the Prince George, and the windfall. This will excite the merchants, create an alarm, and finally secure their interest. Now, my dear sir, spare neither time nor money to effect the insurance. Recollect, the honor of Grub Mudge & Co. is at stake. [*Exit Mudge, L. H. U. E.*]

Vain schemer! how thou prolong'st life! How blest am I with the hopes of the future, where all will be eternal joy or everlasting sorrow. If this succeeds, I secure the hand of my dear Delia. What a sweet moment of enjoyment! If it fail—I am lost, and so are they. Think not of gloomy minutes, sullen hours, or foreboding days; such cloudy vapors but taint the meridian of my prospect—make fools believe, and wise men are sure to rise. [*Exit, L.*]

Enter BILLINGTON and PEPPER, R. CROWQUILL and BULL, L. second E. JOHNS and GUNNELL, L. H. U. E. SPINDLE and SMALL, L. H. R. E. Shake hands, &c. &c.

Johns. [B.] How d'ye do? how are you all? How's everybody? Well, Spindle, how are the stocks to-day?

[*Merchants advance.*]

Spin. Dull, dull. No bidders; market closed heavy. The clouds seemed to portend a terrible revolution.

Pep. How stood the Corn-law Sixes?

Bil. [C.] Couldn't find out; there appeared to be a desire to smother everything to-day. The merchants looked knowingly, frowned, and said nothing. There was, however, a terrible talk about the shipping; though nothing definite could be ascertained; it has been withheld for some cause; probably to prevent a run on the bank. The Board of Merchants, under the *surveillant* of the crown, are shrewd men; they know how to keep the market up.

Crow. Ay, that they do; by the bye, one of them is dead; did you not hear of it?

Gun. No! Why, when did that happen?

Crow. Last night. Poor soul, he's gone to his final resting place.

Bull. They talk hard of Grub Mudge & Co.

Spin. The noise was so loud about 'em, that I became alarmed; was advised to send an officer there to make an arrest, and break up the shop, that has been doing us great injury.

Small. Grub Mudge is a haughty, insolent, proud, over-

bearing man; he crosses our path too often; we lose money by him.

Bull. He's always sure to be ahead. I'm for breaking him up.

Spin. That was just my object in sending the *capias* down there; I think it will be a settler.

SNAPPER *appears*, L. H. U. E., *carelessly looking at houses.*

Johns. [*Observing Snapper.*] I say, there's a fellow by the name of Snapper.

Spin. Who is he?

Johns. A man that has wit to ridicule you, invention to form a story, and humor to keep it along; when he has fairly taken the town by the horns, he assumes a loose, familiar air; shakes your hand, and sighs for another opportunity to waste his time and thoughts on.

Bull. I'm told he knows everything. By all means, Johns, have him this way. We may be able to glean from him much to our mutual advantage.

Johns. Snapper [*Calling to him*]. I say, Snapper, how are you?

Snap. [*Advancing to c.*] Bad enough, indeed. My pockets are minus twenty pounds.

Bill. How so?

Snap. Oh, don't ask me! A draft on Grub Mudge & Co. They've stopped payment; gone to smash; blown up; gun cotton!

Spin. What, Grub Mudge & Co. stopped? Not closed, certainly?

Snap. Yes, sir, closed; locked up.

Spin. You don't mean to say they've failed — bankrupted?

Snap. Gone to smashes. Their ships all lost, and not a shilling in the house.

Spin. Oh, terrible! horrible! I've just sent an execution down for three thousand pounds.

Snap. [*To R.*] Sorry for it; very sorry. Poor devils! Can't pay one per cent. Just had it from their own clerk. [*Enter Tilbury, R. H. Snapper, aside to Tilbury.*] You understand what to say. Recollect, if we succeed, you're one of the firm of Grub Mudge & Co.

Spin. [*To c.*] Well, Mr. Tilbury, what's the news?

Tilbury. (*To c.*) [*Sorrowfully.*] Sad enough, indeed, sir. Hard times these, to be turned out of Grub Mudge & Co's. without your wages. I've been a faithful clerk there, and now receive nothing but my dismissal. 'Tis hard—'tis very hard.

Spin. Think you they won't pay a per centum?

Til. Not a halfpenny. Kept the books myself. Every shilling's afloat at sea.

Spin. Oh, gentlemen! the news is confirmed. We shall all be ruined.

Snap. Oh, if I had only a sufficient claim against that house, so that I might claim the right of investigation without suspicion!

Bill. What would you do, Snapper?

Snap. Why, go down to the Board, and have the scoundrels arrested. I would make such a noise that the Board would be compelled to give me a warrant of arrest against them, and thus effectually ruin, blast their character, so that they would not dare to start in trade again.

Gun. [*Aside to Spin.*] Spindle, sell him your claim; 'tis n't worth a rush. The powerful firm of Grub Mudge & Co. once gone, we, Phoenix-like, rise from its ashes.

Bull. Go it, Spindle, whilst you have so excellent an opportunity. We can assist Snapper, and ruin the house.

Spin. I'll do it, if it's only for revenge sake. I say, Snapper, will you promise to carry your threat into execution?

Snap. My word is sufficient. [*With emphasis.*] If I do not get the money, of which there is but very little probability, you may depend upon my action.

Spin. Enough. What will you give for it?

Snap. [*Considering.*] Why, I ought to have it for nothing. Let me see. I'll give fifty pounds.

Spin. It's a bargain. Here's the claim—their own note.

[*Handing note.*]

Snap. And here's the money. [*Snapper takes note, and gives Spindle money.*] Gentlemen, you all understand the conditions?

All. We do; we do.

Gun. Here comes Grub Mudge. He looks sad enough, indeed.

Snap. [*Aside.*] (*L.*) Not so sad as you may imagine. Still rankles in his side the fatal revenge. He throws a veil

over misfortunes, rather than ruin his cause by circulating 'em. Gentlemen, I stand aside. [*Snapper retires.*]

Enter MUDGE, dressed in deep black, R. H.

Mudge. [*To c.*] Good-morning, gentlemen.

Spin. [*Aside.*] How devilish polite the old rascal is!

Mudge. Mr. Pepper, have you paid those notes I indorsed for you?

Pep. [*Aside.*] How infernal cross! [*To Mudge.*] Not due till to-morrow, sir.

Mudge. Well, look to it, or you'll hear from me. [*To Crowquill.*] Mr. Crowquill, I shall expect you to toe the mark. [*To Gunnell.*] Mr. Gunnell, have you sent down that lot of cotton I purchased from you to my warehouse?

Gun. I have not, sir.

Mudge. If it is not there to-day, sir, you shall hear from me. [*Snapper advances.*]

Bill. [*To Snapper.*] Snapper, now's your chance; at him.

Snap. Never fear, I'll touch him now. [*To Mudge.*] Mr. Mudge, I hold in my hand a small note. Shall I trouble you for payment?

Mudge. Certainly, sir. The firm of Grub Mudge & Co. never refuses payment whenever it may be demanded.

[*Mudge takes out his pocket-book, and pays Snapper money.*]

Spin. [*Alarmed.*] I've been duped. Here's trickery. What can be the meaning of all this?

Gun. 'Tis strange. There must have been a windfall. Snow is plenty.

[*Merchants converse together, and appear alarmed.*]

Enter NEWSBOY, L. H. U. E.

Newsboy. London Times! London Times! Great news!

[*Merchants gather round Newsboy and purchase papers.*]

[*Exit Newsboy, L. H.*]

Gun. Look for shipping, misfortunes, and London items.

Pep. [*To L. H.*] Hollo! What's this? [*Reads.*] "Fatal disaster. — The splendid ship Prince George, discharged from this port by Grub Mudge & Co., was wrecked in the terrible storm of the 17th ultimo. Every hand on board perished. We learn, however, that the firm is perfectly safe, having effected an insurance, in divers offices, to the amount of fifty thousand pounds."

All. Fifty thousand pounds! [Great confusion.]

Enter MESSENGER, L. H. U. E.

Mess. Have I the honor of meeting Mr. Grub Mudge?

Mudge. Sir, that is my name.

Mess. Her Majesty bids me hail you as member of her Board of Merchants.

All. What, member of the Board of Trade!

Mess. She also craves the loan of one hundred thousand pounds, to meet the foreign exigency.

Mudge. Sir, tender her Majesty my profound submission to all her commands.

Bill. What a trap we've been caught in!

Mess. She also bids me hail you as Baron Grub Mudge, to which title be pleased to accept the royal signet.

[Handing a paper to Mudge.]

All. Baron Grub Mudge!

Mudge. Tilbury, take this gentleman down to the accounting-house, and see that he's paid twenty pounds.

Mess. My lord, I do not expect —

Mudge. Nay, sir, I insist. Say to her Majesty that the money shall be deposited this day, if she desires it.

[Exit Tilbury and Messenger.]

Pep. We shall be all hung, drawn, and quartered!

Gun. [Bowing to Mudge.] My lord [aside], I'll send down that corn to-day.

Mudge. 'Tis well, sir.

[Exit Gun., R.]

Pep. [Aside, and unobserved.] My lord, I have one thousand pounds; would you be pleased to use it till wanted?

[Giving M. money.]

Mudge. Certainly, sir, I never forget my business.

[Exit Pepper, L.]

Bull. [Aside, and unobserved.] My lord, here are drafts on Liverpool for three thousand pounds; see to the collection of them.

[Giving drafts to M., exit, R.]

Johns. [Aside, and unobserved.] My lord, I hold Win-gate's notes; have them paid to you.

[Giving him notes, exit, L. H. U. E.]

Bill. [Aside, and unobserved.] My lord, I have 450 bales of South-sea cotton at 6½; will your lordship purchase?

Mudge. Is it fresh?

Bill. Just arrived.

Mudge. Well, consign it to Poperill, at Liverpool, for me;

and be sure to effect an insurance in my name, and let me have the policy immediately.

Bill. It shall be done, my lord. [Exit, R. H. U. E.

Crow. Spin. Small. Good-day, your lordship.

[Bowling, exeunt, R. H. U. E.

Mudge. So it seems men are esteemed by the marks of royal favor and wealth set upon 'em, and never respected for intrinsic worth. Counterfeit honor is a current coin, lifted by the floating capitalist; whilst true worth, when clothed with reverse, sinks deeper in the frightful abyss of oblivion. I weigh the man, not his title; 'tis not the Queen's stamp can make the man better or sounder, though it may make him more current. Dress and title are shadows that come and pass by the same revolution of time. Yesterday, I was supposed to be a beggar; to-day, the title of baron makes me rich, honored. In the next street, there is many a clerk, had he the impetus of one sparkling ray of light from his employer, 'twould make him an honor to our city. The enterprise of our neighbor, Liverpool, has made her what she is; whilst her sister city is creeping along by the slow tide of a still river. 'Tis not her harbor, 'tis enterprise and internal improvement that have lifted her to the imposing site she now occupies. Snapper, what I have this day witnessed astonishes me; you are a man of greater parts than I took you for.

Snap. [L.] You may now buy a whole kingdom without a letter of credit.

Mudge. But, sir, where is this to end?

Snap. You, sir, need have no apprehension; you said nothing, did nothing, promised nothing but what you can perform; and as for me, why, I can steer my bark to Erin's Isle. [To R.

Enter DELIA, L. H.

Delia. [L.] My dear father, you stayed so long I feared something had really happened.

Mudge. [To L.] My dear child, all is now well. My absence was unavoidable; could I recount what has happened, absence were a pleasure indeed. And, now 'tis over, I sigh for the rest of heart and pleasure only felt at home.

Delia. My heart is too full to give utterance to the joy I feel at the thought that home again will be a sure solace!

Mudge. [To c.] To-morrow the firm will be open under new auspices, which will do honor to the veteran house.

Snap. [To L.] And now that everything begins to look with a new face, my Delia will not forget how dear she is to me ! that my soul is in her existence and our union !

Mudge. Lock'd in each other's love, the banquet of consolation you have made for me willingly gives what my heart dares not refuse ; and so, in the hour of marriage, ends my reign, and all I have goes with it. [Locks their hands.]

Snap. Let no foul aspersions fall upon this scene ; but in this sweet embrace [*embrace*] be a pledge of my fidelity ! Sir [to *Mudge*], I find I'm still a heavy debtor to your house, and could the firm of Payall & Co. disgorge its till, it would most willingly empty its contents before you ! You have its heart, if you have not their money !

Mudge. This moment satisfies me that peace and concord are preferable to dignity and power. But come, my children, we'll now go home.

Snap. Some business down the street will engage my attention for a few moments, when I will be with you ; until then farewell, thou brightest prospect of my life !

[Exit, *Mudge* and *Delia*, L.]

Snap. [*Solus.*] Time in its measured tread
Sweeps o'er us like the waves
Roll'd in the awful surge ;
Naught heeds, naught sees, till hours'
Fate that comes upon ;
When, sadly, all is pass'd.
Why dream we of the light
When clouds have thicken'd o'er
The palmy life of bliss ?
The dream is pass'd, and with it fled
Joys, that ne'er will come again !
Upon the flickering lamp
I've often mark'd the spark
Until it died away.
And such is life ; yet man
Fells man, and trifles with his rights ;
And hence it ever is :
Reflect a clouded shade
Upon a man, and then

All revel in the charms
Adversity in others bring.
But when audacity
Flashes 'twixt man's judgment and
His melient foibles,
Assumes a virtue that
It seldom wears, how they
Hang upon that breath,
Regardless whence it came ;
Then subtlety, soon mistaken
For wisdom, wealth, and power ;
Whilst daring impudence
Secures him all
Virtue and protection !

[*Exit*, L. H. U. E.

SCENE III.—*Another Street in London. Enter [hastily]*
BILLINGTON, L. PEPPER, R. CROWQUILL, L. H. U. E.
BULL, L. H. U. E. JOHNS, L. 2d E. GUNNELL, R. H.
2d E. SPINDLE, L.

Gun. [C.] Have you heard the news ! Ruined ! Ruined !
All humbug ! Grub Mudge isn't worth a doit ! His insurance was effected two weeks after the accident happened !

Pep. [L.] Nor is he Baron Grub Mudge !

Crow. [R.] Nor member of her Majesty's Board of Trade !

Bull. [L.] Nor did the Queen request the loan of a hundred thousand pounds of him !

Johns. [R.] Nor has the old Grub failed, but is actually paying off his debts in our coin ! Fools that we were ! Duped, duped !

Gun. Oh ! My eight hundred bushels of corn !

Pep. Oh ! My thousand pounds !

Bull. Oh ! My drafts on Liverpool for three thousand pounds, English currency !

Johns. Oh ! My Wingate notes !

Bill. Oh ! My four hundred and fifty bales of South-sea cotton, at 6 $\frac{3}{4}$; and the old codger had the daring impudence to ask me if it was fresh, too !

Gun. This is treason against the Crown !

Pep. He assumed the Queen's name and title !

Bill. He conspired to rob us !

Spin. Swear to be revenged !

[*All cluster round Spindle, and hold up canes and umbrellas.*]

Gun. As I live, here he comes, or his ghost!

[*Enter Grub Mudge, L.—merchants attack him—he parries them off with his cane.*]

Mudge. [c.] Off! off! I say. Dam'me, you're worse than bees!

Pep. [*To Mudge.*] Where's my thousand pounds?

Bull. [*To Mudge.*] And where's my drafts on Liverpool?

Johns. [*To Mudge.*] And where's my Wingate notes?

Bill. [*To Mudge.*] And, my four hundred and fifty bales of South-sea cotton? fresh! fresh, sir!

Gun [*To Mudge.*] And my eight hundred bushels of corn?

Mudge. [*Enraged.*] Gone to the devil, I hope! Silence! Silence! you dogs! I'm no monster; nor have I five ears! One at a time, and hearken to me. I do no business in the public street; come, in an hour, to the firm of Tilbury & Co., and I'll meet you all there; this is no place for business.

Gun. Tilbury & Co.! I never heard of such a firm; here's another juggle; I'm certain there's no such place of business in all London.

Mudge. Yes, sir; the firm of Tilbury & Co. is in existence, and now the first in point of wealth in this country. And, let me tell you, gentlemen, you may consider it an honor to be known by the house.

Gun. We shall, when we know there is such a house.

Mudge. You shall be assured of that.

Pep. How may we?

Mudge. By calling at the old firm of Grub Mudge & Co. Gentlemen, fare you well; I shall expect you.

[*Exit Mudge, R.*]

SCENE IV.—*Commercial house of Grub Mudge & Co. Desks, chairs, papers, books, tables, &c. Doors L. H. R. H.*

Enter TILBURY, R.

Til. (c.) [*Soliloquizing.*] Fortune doth enrich her votaries by such strange devices: fluttering up and down, till at last her merit gives where least it is expected.

She jests—she raves—she wills—

She woos—yet seldom stays

To reap the harvest of her seed.
Mine was made of toys and impudence ;
The most trifling scheme
That human wit can forge
By the common accident of a passing moment,
Or that flies before a breath of wind—
When quickly caught, and shrewdly managed,
Or that ambition dares put in practice—
Will oft respond prophetic to our will.

Now my fortune must have reared its head when nature prompted me to use that musket with such unparalleled and decisive effect. Now, what would my old lady say, if she were here to see how her son John has risen (from a poor counter-hopper) a member of one of the largest firms in all London? John Tilbury & Co.! So much for faith and fidelity. I entered this place a stripling, and without the least exertion became a man of some importance (I fancy) in the community! [*Drawing himself up.*] If Mrs. Tilbury was to come down here and call me John, I should certainly go into hysterics! I should say: Madam! you mistake; I am Mr. John Tilbury, of the great house of Tilbury & Co., of Cheapside by the way, London. Then the old lady would look aghast—fall into a fit—and forget herself.

[*To L. Struts up and down.*]

Enter MUDGE, R.

Mudge. [c.] Johnny, my boy, get me a chair; Grub Mudge is growing old!

Til. [*Aside.*] "Johnny, my boy!"—I think, he ought to call me Mr. Tilbury! He forgets my eminent position! John Tilbury & Co.! [*Gets Mudge a chair.*]

Mudge. [*Sits.*] There's a good boy!

Til. [*Aside.*] Boy! Damn it, he don't see my straight collar! And straps, too!

Mudge. When you have striven as many years as I have in the toilsome life of mercantile traffic, you'll reflect upon the importance of promptitude and attention; a good conscience; and useful, not only to yourself, but mankind; constant in the tenor of your conduct; in the evenness of your temper; steady and patient in business; nor pass over an affair, until examined and understood; careful to engage

too hastily in affairs, or hearken to the too busy informer; but inspect the actions and characters of men with fairness, and without suspicion or timidity, seldom fails to secure wealth!

Til. [*Aside.*] Sound, and well rendered!

Mudge. And who have been here, Johnny, for me?

Til. No one, sir; except on affairs of business with the "new firm!" Hem!

Mudge. [*Rising.*] (*To L.*) What may pass here to-day, Mr. Tilbury, must be like unto a wild bird in a cage, whose door is closed against the world! The secrets of your master gains the credit of him you serve and the approbation of mankind!

Enter BILLINGTON, PEPPER, CROWQUILL, BULL, JOHNS, GUNNELL, and SPINDLE (R.), followed by SYKES and DYKES.

Gentlemen, I promised to assure you of the existence of the new firm of Tilbury & Co. Allow me to present you; Mr. Tilbury, you; gentlemen, this is the head of John Tilbury & Co.! To be acquainted, would be to your advantage!

All. Mudge's clerk!

Gun. The man "who" was turned off, without his wages!

Til. At your service!

Mudge. The reward of fidelity!

Gun. A conspiracy, under the new law, to put property out of the reach of creditors!

Johns. [*Aside to Pep.*] This is dodging; I have Sykes and Dykes here to arrest; bring the old devil to't, or we'll be cozened again!

Pep. Mr. Mudge, we did not come here to trifle or waste time; I have prepared myself with process; and we are determined now to have justice done us!

Mudge. Who dares speak thus in my own house? Look to it! I charge those officers, before they take the responsibility, to be satisfied they have just grounds for my apprehension!

Sykes. We know our duty too well for that! We'll not move a peg until we're satisfied they can make good their charge!

Dykes. That we won't!

Mudge. [*C.*] Now, Mr. Pepper, you appear to be foremost; what have you against me?

Pep. [To c.] A thousand pounds, I gave you to keep for me!

Gun. [Aside.] Yes! and he will keep it for you!

Mudge. Prove it, sir, and here's the money!

Pep. [Astonished.] What! did no one see me give him a thousand pounds? [To R.]

All. No! no!

Mudge. Mr. Bull, your turn comes next!

Bull. [To c.] My drafts on Liverpool for three thousand pounds!

Mudge. Well, sir!

Bull. I can prove you presented them!

Mudge. You forget, sir, that possession is the evidence of payment for negotiable instruments.

Bull. Oh! I'm a ruined man! [Rushes up stage.]

Mudge. Mr. Johns, what have you to say?

Johns. [To c.] The Wingate notes, drawn by Wingate to my order, and indorsed by me and by you, and sold to Spillman & Co.

Mudge. I refer you, sir, to my answer to Mr. Bull.

Johns. Oh! oh! oh! [Rushes to R.]

Mudge. Mr. Billington, I'll hear your demand!

Bill. [To c.] [Nervous.] Four hundred and fifty bales of South-sea cotton at 6 $\frac{3}{4}$; fresh, sir, fresh! Consigned, sir, to Liverpool, sir!

Mudge. When the insurance was effected, you stated that they belonged to Grub Mudge & Co. Was it not so, sir?

Bill. Oh! oh! oh! he's a perfect rat-catcher!

[Rushes to R.]
Mudge. Thus it seems, that honour, tho' it shines unsuspected—in the eyes of the world—appears more like beauty than reality—dependent on the opinions of others.

[Gunnell goes to desk, writes, and returns.]

Gun. [c.] Mr. Mudge, you purchased of me eight hundred bushels of corn; I neglected to give you a receipt; here 'tis, sir. We are square?

Mudge. Gunnell, I believe you to be a man of better heart than these reptiles around you; you would shrink (were you at liberty) from the petty and vile artifices they have resorted to: they've grasped at the impossible, and lost the attainable. Force is the most odious and detestable engine that can be

offered to the human imagination ; it dispels fear, and rouses courage. The crime, like the punishment they would have inflicted, now rebounds in their own bosoms ; you behold their deplorable situation. You have pursued a course that showers credit upon you. I am an honorable man ; and reward the meritorious. Mr. Tilbury give Mr. Gunnell your check for forty pounds eight shillings and ten pence.

Gun. Sir, sir !

Mudge. Not a word, sir !

Gun. [*To R. Tilbury writes check and hands it to Gunnell, aside.*] This is the greatest inconsistency I ever heard of ; I gave the man a receipt for money I never got, expected to be kicked down stairs, and he gives me a check for the money. [*To Mudge.*] Sir, your servant. [*To merchants.*] I wish you luck, 'pon my soul I do. [*Exit, R.*]

Sykes. Well, I suppose we may go ? We don't make an arrest, that's certain. [*Going.*]

Johns. Here, stop ; we have another charge against him. [*To Mudge.*] Didn't you represent yourself as member of the Board of Trade ?

Spin. And as Baron Grub Mudge ?

Mudge. No, sirs, neither of those titles, by word of mouth, or innuendo, have I claimed ; nor can you prove it.

[*Mudge writes at desk.*]

Dykes. Oh ! we can't stay here. [*To Mudge.*] Excuse us, sir ; we were induced to come by these men.

[*Exit Sykes and Dykes, R.*]

Enter SNAPPER and DELIA, L.

Spin. Charley Snapper !

Bull. Charley Snapper !

Johns. Charley Snapper !

Bill. Charley Snapper !

Snap. [*L.*] I say to you that you know not yourselves ; your value is in proportion to the length of your shadows ; in the morning you're as tall as cypress, and strut in every public place, doing mischief ; at noon your diminished shadows fall about your heels ; whilst the rays of the sun last, space seems too small for such beings, which the shades of night extinguish. How well you've managed the present crisis ! you deplore the sad reverses ; is it the fault of the times ? No. 'Tis the fault of yourselves.

Mudge. [*Advancing.*] Now, gentlemen [*to merchants*], sign this paper. It contains a full acknowledgment that you have done me wrong, and that I owe you nothing. Refuse, and you know me; I will not be trifled with. Sign it [*merchants hesitate*], or to-morrow's sun will shed its lustre upon other heads than yours. Sign it, I say.

[*They sign, and are about to retire, Mudge, c.*

Another word before we part; learn from me what is really worth more than countless bags of dirty gold, such that will in after years create for you a solid standing, and gain for me your approbation and applause. How careless you have been; how hasty in disposing of your wares; reform it; do your business hereafter with more honesty, and beyond reproach. Though you may think your creditor is honest, yet, have it in your power to clinch him if he is not (for you now find what is the fruitful issue of your speed). Behold the actions of a man who never wronged the weakest subject in the realm. [*Takes out his pocket-book, and pays all the merchants. Merchants appear astonished, and are about to go.*] Stop! you are merchants, so am I; be it a rule, never oppress a fallen tradesman; should, perchance, an evil wind pass by him, check its flight rather than facilitate its progress; nor desire his ruin, his reputation, and the destruction of his family. The fall of one man brings many with him, and makes not one happy. Assistance saves him from destruction, and his wife from beggary. Such conduct will come home to ye; nay, has come. You would have built yourselves upon my downfall. What are the consequences? Disgrace and contempt. You've been foiled in the perfidious design you laid for me; whilst Grub Mudge rises above the mingling odium around him. Now, go.

[*Exit merchants, dolefully, L.*

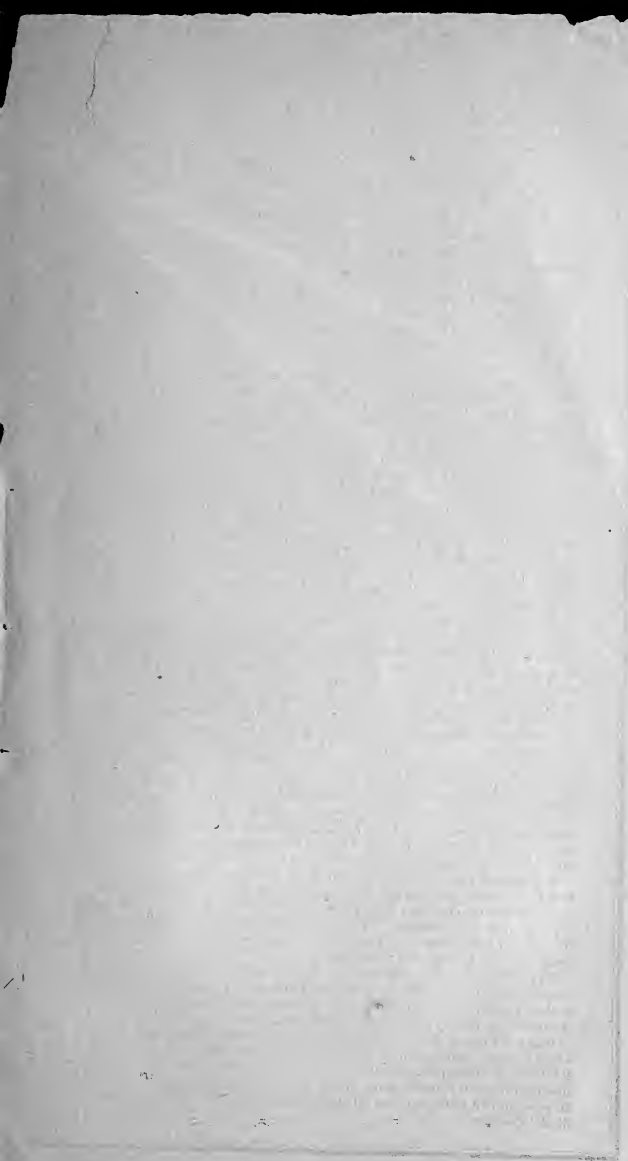
[*Snapper, L. Mudge, M. Delia, R. Tilbury L. H.*] My dear children, I now resign to you the stock and trade of Grub Mudge & Co.

You enter upon your duties with the satisfaction of knowing that the Company is free, and all its debts are paid. Stop—stop—there is one debt we can never pay. [*Brings Snapper, Tilbury, and Delia to front.*] It is here. [*Pointing to audience.*] Ladies and gentlemen: I am satisfied, Grub Mudge & Co. can never pay you. They are growing old and unfit for work. But, if you will forgive the wrongs

they have (innocently) committed (out of the purest motives), and patronize the new firm, my life on't you'll ever receive the *heartfelt thanks of Grub Mudge & Co.*

DISPOSITION OF CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

TILBURY. MUDGE. DELIA. SNAPPER.



OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

No city in the Union can boast of so much dramatic talent as that of Philadelphia. It is an art which few correctly possess, and, when achieved, deserves the highest commendation, and we gladly lend our pen to record such noble instances of genius. We have a Conrad, a Hubbell, a Boker, a Bird, and a Brown, who have all met with distinguished success in their productions. The last author who claims a niche in the histrionic school, and of whose work we are about to write, is that of Lucas Hirst, Esq., one of whose productions we now have before us. The comedy of "GRUB MUDGE & Co.," just published by Stokes & Brother, No. 209 Chestnut Street, we think worthy of public consideration; it abounds with beautiful imagery, sentiment, and a happy flow of ideas, couched in the most beautiful language; and cannot be considered devoid of plot and scenic action. We consider it decidedly an acting play of the first rank of *minor pieces*. Every scene is filled with animation and dialogue, of a lively and vivid description. The parts do not, like many plays, drag through with a dull, heavy monotony, keeping the audience in suspense and conjecture in divining what the author is driving at; but here, at once, we are from the opening informed of the character and future development of the plot. The encouragement to the histrionic profession in former times, in this city, was much greater than it now is; but by the energetic management of our managers, they have almost recuperated the lost infatuation of our play-goers. It has been said by a very profound erudite critic, that the stage affords a greater opportunity of correcting the morals and touching the heart, than any other means known to us. When George Barnwell was first performed in London, an auditor who had robbed his master was so touched by the denouement of this play that he retired from the theatre in tears, prostrated himself before his employer, confessed his error, and received the forgiveness of his master. Of like effect, when the Gamester was performed, the vice of gaming being then so prevalent, it was supposed that the little great would have cried it down; on the contrary, however, it had an opposite effect, and materially aided in effecting an amelioration of the pernicious vice of gaming; and hence became one of the standard plays of the day, and the topic of general admiration in the pulpit, in the Senate, in the street, and on the stage. The play before us is of a tendency to correct the viciousness of those who are too often found in our midst, destroying what is of the highest benefit and wealth to our community.—*Pennsylvanian*.

GRUB MUDGE & Co., by Lucas Hirst.—This new comedy was laid on our table just before going to press. The plot is modern, active, and one that occurs in everyday life. It is certainly very properly developed; the scenes are consecutive, the characters well moulded, and the language and sentiment not inferior to the petite comedies of the day. We may call it a pleasant, humorous, and interesting play—one calculated for the stage.—*Sunday Ledger*.

A NEW COMEDY.—The comedy of Grub Mudge & Co., by Lucas Hirst, was laid before us to-day. The language is good; in parts humorous and interesting, and the plot clearly conducted, the characters highly marked, and quite natural. The model entirely original, and the catastrophe just and proper. Though we did not see it performed, we should think it a fair acting play.—*Argus*.

GRUB MUDGE & Co.—A comedy in one act, by Lucas Hirst, Esq., has been laid upon our table by Stokes & Brother. It exceeds in merit the author's previous productions, and is worthy of bearing his name. It is published as played at the Chestnut in 1850.—*City Item*.

GRUB MUDGE & Co., a petite comedy, by Lucas Hirst, Esq., a well-known legal gentleman of this city, has been published by Stokes & Brother, Philadelphia Arcade, in very good style, and will meet with quite a ready sale, for its piquant and interesting plot. It was played with success at the Chestnut in 1850.—*Model Courier*.

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